

REMARKS

The application is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-15 and 21-25 are pending, claims 1, 15, and 22 being independent.

There are no formal matters outstanding.

Claims 1-6, 10-15, and 21 stand rejected as anticipated by FOUTS 3,900,221.

Claims 7-9 stand rejected as obvious over FOUTS; and claims 22-25 as obvious over FOUTS in view of HOWELL 5,149,143.

The dependent claims are believed allowable at least for depending from an allowable claim.

Applicant has carefully studied FOUTS and does not believe that FOUTS is anticipatory. Accordingly, applicant's response is focused on the anticipation rejection, applicant believing that the obviousness rejections are therefore also not viable.

The Official Action reads independent claims 1 and 15 onto FOUTS Figures 1-3 as follows and indicated in bold:

A connector device comprising a body portion **34** having a bore **15** defining a housing to receive one of two members to be inter-connected and a stem portion **(the illustrated horizontal protrusion [36])** of substantially cylindrical form having a major axis disposed substantially perpendicular to the major axis of

said bore defined by the body portion 34, said stem portion being adapted to be received, in use, in a housing defined by a bore of a second of the two members to be inter-connected by the connector device, and said stem portion comprising in the outer surface thereof an annular groove 41 having the major axis thereof coincident with the major axis of the stem portion and said annular groove being provided axially inwards from the distal end of the stem portion. (Claim 1).

First note that Figure 2 shows that "bore 15" is the fluid opening of connector 16, connector 16 being shown as including female locking groove 42. Connectors 16 fit over either end of elbow connector 34 and are locking in place with compressible O-rings, e.g, 43.

The interior passage of elbow 34 is fluid passage 35.

Since the Official Action indicates that the recited stem corresponds to the horizontal protrusion of FOUTS, and the claim recites the stem portion being disposed substantially perpendicular to the bore defined by the body portion, it follows that the "bore" must be the vertical portion of fluid opening 35.

Note that the recitation is "a body portion having a bore defining a housing to receive one of two members..." Clearly, the vertical portion of elbow 34 does not include a bore which defines a housing to receive a member. Rather, it is the

exterior of the vertical portion of elbow 34 that mounts externally connector 16.

In this regard, also note that claim 11 recites that the body portion defines a through-bore to receive one of two members to be inter-connected. Again, connector 16 mounts externally on elbow 34. There is no through-bore.

In the interest of advancing the case, claim 1 has been amended to include the recitations of claim 11.

Allowance of claim 1 is solicited.

Claims 2-14 and 21 have been amended to depend from claim 15.

Claim 15 has been amended as to form to separate the individual recitations.

As to claim 15, FOUTS also fails to disclose the recited "locking means selectively operable to inter-connect the connector device and said one of two members."

The O-rings of FOUTS do not meet this recitation.

See that the recitation is to "said locking means being supported by said housing of the second of said two members to lie either in i) a retracted position whereby the stem portion may move freely into and out of said housing of the second member or ii) one of at least two locking positions in which the locking means extends into said annular groove, a first of said two locking positions being one at which the locking means inhibits

axial movement of the stem portion outwards from said housing of the second member but allows relative rotational movement of the stem portion and housing, and a second locking position being one at which the locking means bears against the stem portion to inhibit both said axial and rotational movements."

Specifically, FOUTS fails to disclose an assembly in which there may be a loose inter-connection to permit rotation without axial separation and a second, secure, configuration in which both rotation and axial separation are prevented.

Accordingly, when the full recitations of claim 15 are considered, there is no anticipation. Reconsideration and allowance of claim 15 are respectfully requested.

As to claim 22, FOUTS is offered as disclosing the recited features less the screw threaded aperture to receive a screw.

However, FOUTS fails to disclose "the body portion comprises a through-bore dimensioned to receive a post." FOUTS does not include a through-bore to receive a post. Indeed, the vertical portion of elbow 34 merges into the horizontal portion and so clearly there is no through-bore.

To ensure the claim is read as intended, claim 22 has been amended to recite "the through-bore being open at two ends to pass the post through each of the two ends."

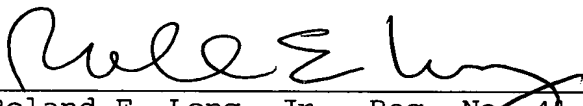
Reconsideration and allowance of claim 22 are solicited.

In view of the above, applicant believes that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & THOMPSON



Roland E. Long, Jr., Reg. No. 41,949
745 South 23rd Street
Arlington, VA 22202
Telephone (703) 521-2297
Telefax (703) 685-0573
(703) 979-4709

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